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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

This canvas by Frank M. Armington, formerly well known in the artists' colony in Paris and in the American Church there, now resident in New York, was presented to The Riverside Church as a memorial to his wife, Caroline Armington. This canvas, along with its companion painting, "Gethsemane," hangs in the Assembly Hall Club Room. The Church is grateful indeed to Mr. Armington for the gift of these pictures, and proud to give a place to a memorial to the distinguished artist, Caroline Armington, his wife.

When Great Events Make Common Tasks Seem Trivial

SERMON BY HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

THIS terrific world situation affects us all in many ways, but one effect in particular every one of us must feel: it makes our ordinary daily tasks seem trivial. Here is a stupendous upheaval, threatening to shake civilization to pieces, the greatest world revolution, they tell us, since the downfall of the Roman Empire, and yet we go on, day after day, with our common duties, household tasks, personal relationships, office routine, professional service, getting on with people, helping a little here and there if we can—how trifling it all seems!

To be sure, this feeling of mediocrity and humdrum is one of the major curses of human life anyway, even in ordinary days. Because of this many people die long before they are really dead, their lives losing zest, and a dull, drab, gray fog of commonplaceness settling over them. One American humorist, after trying to make his diary sound important, says that at last he gave it up and began writing every day: "Got up, washed, and went to bed."

Many of us, however, who in calmer times did not surrender to this mood, are tempted to it now. We look at the world today with telescopic eyes—the events are far-flung and prodigious—and then when we turn those same eyes upon our day-by-day routine, we can hardly see it. It is, therefore, with a real situation in mind, affecting us all, that we turn our attention to a saying of Jesus: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much."

This much at least is clear, that to have our commonplace living elevated, dignified, and made meaningful, would be a redeeming experience. Why was Charles Dickens so popular? Because he did just that. He took ordinary people, limited, queer, commonplace, and he made their story more thrilling than the life of kings. They walked across his pages filled with interest, humor, gentleness, courage, and zest. Stefan Zweig is right in saying about Dickens: "He unveiled the poetry that was ambushed in the prosaic. . . . He gave to simple things and unpretentious people a glory all their own. . . . To thousands, nay to millions, he revealed where to find the everlasting spark in their uneventful lives, where to look for the glow of quiet joy hidden beneath the ashes of the familiar."

Today we turn to a greater than Dickens, who says to us amid the stupendous events of our time: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

One element in our American temperament runs counter to the truth we are trying to get at. We Americans have been notoriously impressed by size. A big country, big buildings, big business, the biggest this or that—we are noted for our interest in large dimensions, and to say of anyone that he does

things in a big way, is for all Americans a compliment. Some one has called this attitude "Jumboism." Unhappy the man today, however, who has no other view of life than that, for the big things are going wrong. Vast empires at war, whole races set against whole races, world-wide conflicts of economic imperialism, great nations outlawing religion and turning to atheism, one powerful land after another accepting communism, fascism, naziism — who can find light and hope in the way the big affairs of the world are going?

But now ask, Where are the sources of encouragement, so that we do keep going, sometimes with high heart, our joy in living refreshed, and even God made real? Surely the answer lies in little things. I know some homes that are a heaven on earth, some friends whose presence kindles all the best within, some characters making of small garden plots lovely places, some quiet souls carrying tasks and burdens with splendid courage, some spiritual lives that make one sure that God is there, and some groups of people, too, organizing goodwill to bring at least a little light in dark places.

This in general is a true picture of our world today, isn't it? The big things are going wrong, and the experiences that kindle faith and courage, dust us off and set us on our feet again, and sometimes even put a song upon our lips, come from sources characterized not by quantity but by quality—small, vital, quiet, deep, real, spiritual. In a world like this we may not say, then, that it is unimportant how we handle our daily lives. That is where most of the world's light comes from today, that, as Portia said, shines like a candle in this naughty world. It comes from the way good people handle small affairs well. Let that light die out and the whole world would be dark indeed. What if Jesus, in a sense far profounder than we have commonly supposed, was right when he said, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much"?

Nevertheless, lest anyone should suppose that we are going to neglect the world's large affairs, let us organize our thought by asking, What are the great problems of the world today? What would you say they are?

Surely, for one thing, saving democracy. We all would say that. Let us start with that, then, and see how the truth of the Master's saying operates! It is a dangerous fallacy to suppose that democracy is mainly a matter of vast political overheads and constitutional arrangements, and to forget that democracy is the most spiritually demanding order of society ever proposed, its indispensable foundations in the character and attitude of plain people. One of the most interesting things in our time is to see the skeptics and cynics come over to join the preachers. I could name many who have done that. A letter came recently from the magazine *Time*, saying they were writing an article about that, and asking any new names that could be suggested. Mr. Walter Lippmann is typical. A few years ago we preachers were attacking Mr. Lippmann because of his frankly skeptical writings about religion, but now listen to him: "What is left of our civilization will not be maintained, what is wrecked will not be restored, by imagining that some new gadget can be invented, some new formula improvised, which will save it. Our civilization can be maintained and restored only by remembering and rediscovering the truths, and by reëstablishing the

virtuous habits, on which it was founded. There is no use looking into the blank future for some new and fancy revelation of what man needs in order to live. The revelation has been made. By it man conquered the jungle about him and the barbarian within him. The elementary principles of work and sacrifice and duty; the transcendent criteria of truth and justice and righteousness, the grace of love and charity: these are the things that have made men free. Men can keep their freedom and reconquer it only by these means. These are the terms stipulated in the nature of things; and only in this profound, this stern, and this tested wisdom, shall we find once more courage and light." Well, that is preaching.

What has happened in one man after another to cause this change—not, it may be, in theoretical conviction, but in emphasis? Concern for democracy has caused it, and the perception that the huge political overheads of the democratic system will collapse like a house of cards save as democracy is sustained from underneath by the moral character and attitudes of millions of plain, ordinary people in the midst of their daily lives.

Many of us grew up in a generation when it was taken for granted that ever-increasing democracy around the world was the inevitable wave of the future. "Invent the printing press," said Carlyle, "and democracy is inevitable." But today we see one dictator after another seizing the printing press and using it to crush democracy. Invent the radio, and is democracy inevitable? But the radio can become one of dictatorship's most potent instruments. No, the taproot of democracy is not in any vast, large-scale thing whatsoever—not in mass printing, mass radio, or even mass politics. The taproot of democracy is deep in the daily life of the people. Democracy begins in homes where children are welcomed into the comradeship of a coöperative family life. It grows strong in schools where respect for personality is given expression and training, alike in its privileges and its obligations. It is disciplined in the running of small enterprises, neighborhoods, and communities, where men and women learn to do common things together. It is evidenced in daily business and social intercourse, where tolerance amid difference, and conference rather than violence are used to decide issues. Democracy is a way of daily living, and it gets its ultimate vitality in citizens whose consciences have been touched at least a little by the love of God, and who practise what Lord Moulton in his significant phrase called voluntary "obedience to the Unenforceable."

Well, here in the thick of our daily, ordinary, commonplace living is where the fate of democracy will ultimately be decided, and yet we talk about the huge events of our time making our daily life seem trivial. That is getting life all out of focus. Ordinary daily living—homes, schools, churches, small enterprises, neighborhoods, communities, personal character—never mattered more in the world's history than it does today.

Suppose that the democracies should be outwardly defeated. I do not think they will be, but suppose they were, and the vast political overhead of democratic nations should collapse! Where would democracy find its resurrection day? You know! There are millions of us who have been brought up in democratic homes, democratic schools, democratic churches, who have had woven into us as part of

the texture of our lives respect for personality, coöperation with others, the love of liberty. There, inside plain people in daily living, is the vitality that, though men should crucify democracy outwardly and bury it, would raise it from the dead again and roll the stone away.

So, there are two ways of facing our generation: one is to say that its stupendous events make our commonplace daily living seem mediocre, humdrum, and trivial; the other is to see that even in so critical a matter as maintaining the foundations of democracy, Jesus is everlastingly right. "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

Come further now and ask what another major problem of our generation is. Surely, getting on with people. There are many ways of describing war and its causes, but the gist of the matter is that people cannot get on with one another. I wonder if anybody wants this madness of modern war. Winston Churchill is marshaling a whole empire to desperate battle, but were one to ask him what he really thinks about war, he would say, what indeed he did say in 1936. War, Mr. Churchill said, used to be "cruel and magnificent"; now it is "cruel and squalid. War has ceased to be a gentleman's game. To hell with it!" But despite all such revulsion against war, here it is, for a reason that carries the whole matter into the heart of our ordinary daily life: people find it hard to get on with one another.

Where, then, is the ground of our hope that sometime, even as great nations, we can get on with one another? That hope is grounded on the fact that in a thousand and one ordinary, day-by-day, little experiences, goodwill does work, friendship is effective, tolerance and mutual understanding do compose differences, coöperation displaces hostility, and we do get on with people. Do not say that these victories of friendliness and goodwill in daily personal relationships do not matter. They are the leaven in the lump.

Remember the motto of the American Friends' Service Committee: "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." So! We are tempted today to spend much of our time cursing the darkness. Well, it is dark. So what! Thank God for every candle of friendliness and goodwill, every victory of tolerance over bigotry, and coöperation over hostility, however small, assuring us that still light is in the world! "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

It is particularly interesting that of all people Jesus should have felt this. He too lived in a time of stupendous events. Take two phrases as typical of his era: "the Roman Empire"—that was the major fact of his generation, and that was huge; "the Kingdom of God on earth"—that was his primary ideal, and that was all-inclusive. Yet, listen to this strange man dealing with the Roman Empire as a fact and with the Kingdom of God on earth as an ideal! "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, . . . he shall in no wise lose his reward." "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." "If any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray?" To the man with the one talent Jesus heard God saying, "Thou oughtest therefore

to have put my money to the bankers." And of the woman who cast one farthing into the treasury, he said, "Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they." There is a glorification of the commonplace, unequaled, I think, in history, by one whose coming was to shake the world.

Moreover, when now across nearly two thousand years we remember him, what do we recall—that he had an incidental conversation with a woman of Samaria at a well-side, that a man named Nicodemus one evening came to call upon him, that he visited Mary and Martha in their home, that Zacchaeus once invited him to dinner, that blind Bartimaeus called to him from the roadside, that he laid his hands on little children and took them in his arms. When one stops to think of it, what we chiefly remember about Jesus is astounding—commonplace, ordinary, everyday living lifted up and made to illustrate the ideas, attitudes, and principles that alone can redeem the world. His whole life is a commentary on his own words: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

Consider another major problem of our time—liberating personality. That is the essence of our despair about the world today, this rise of oppressive regimes that imprison personality. One of you here this morning had lived all your life in Vienna, a scientist loving your work. Then the *Anschluss* took place and naziism moved in. Nobody outwardly disturbed you. Your daily life went on apparently as usual. You could have remained there untroubled. But something had happened. The air was stifling. You tell me that the climax came when one day you went out alone among the great mountains that from your boyhood you had loved. There you were amid the solitude of the mountains, but even the mountains were not the same. You could not endure them. Liberty was gone. So you are here today.

This, then, is one of the great problems of the world—setting personality free—but do we mean that this is a problem in the large only and not in the small? Does any one of us pass a single day without dealing with people, circumscribed, impeded, imprisoned, whom we can help to set free? During our Civil War Senator Charles Sumner, absorbed in his great plans for the abolition of slavery, was asked by Julia Ward Howe to meet some friends. He declined. "Really, Julia," he said in his top-lofty way, "I have lost all my interest in individuals." "Why, Charles!" she answered, "God hasn't got as far as that yet."

We are not saying that we can do nothing directly about the vast problems of the world. We can. We are citizens who should make our influence felt through every channel open to our impact. But for most of us the major part of every day must still be spent on common tasks. If, being common, they look also commonplace, it is because there is something the matter with our eyes. Some people make commonplaceness out of everything; some people in the humblest circumstances, say,

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God.

This is one of the most significant contrasts between people, and nowhere is this contrast more evident than in personal relationships. We thank God for America and her liberty, but, for all that, we could still have been imprisoned personalities had it not been

for some people who thought that daily living was important, that making good homes, good schools, good churches was important—people who tried to see what there was in us that could be released and brought out, who believed in it when we did not, and kept on believing in it when we were discouraged. The Africans have a proverb that any fool can tell how many apples there are on a tree, but that it takes a wise man to tell how many trees there are in an apple. So! Who of us here does not have reason to thank God for some people who in ordinary, daily relationships guessed what might be grown out of us? If liberating personality is one of the major problems of the world today, then he who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much.

Finally, the preservation of Christianity is a major problem—and if that is not a personal matter of daily living, what is? In one great nation after another, institutional, organized Christianity is crippled or dead. In Russia it has gone. The Russian church has not a single seminary left in Europe for the training of its priests. In Germany the organized church is so limited, so watched and censored by the Gestapo that on any public issue it cannot even whisper. But even in Russia, they tell us, increasing numbers of peasant families are teaching their children about Christ. Christianity is still there and growing, not as an organization but as a movement among the people. And they tell us of the powerful drive of personal Christianity in Germany, underground, not institutionalized but private and individual. That is the way Christianity started in the first place in the Roman Empire; that is always the source of its ultimate dynamic and vitality. Hostile governments can smash its institutions, but so long as multitudes of plain people in ordinary, everyday living, cherish its truth, its resurrection day will come.

Indeed, think of the case even here in America where the church is free. What is the one argument for Christianity to which there is no answer? I do not know a single theological argument that cannot one way or another be answered. I do not know any great Christian organization that is not so faulty that a man, if he wants to, cannot one way or another justify staying out of it. But when one sees an honest-to-goodness Christian life, a person so humble, it may be, that he has no idea he is making any impression, but who in daily duty-doing and burden-bearing is a Christian, I do not know the answer to that.

My friends, these are days of prodigious events, but all the more and not the less important is our daily living. To be sure, it is not easy to handle little things as though they were significant. Life is full of humdrum and drudgery. Every great vocation, even, however thrilling as a whole, has long stretches in it of prosy and wearisome routine. George Herbert the poet sang,

> Who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
> Makes that, and the action, fine.

Well, that is a noble sentiment, but, after all, George Herbert was a man and probably he never had to sweep a room; at least he did not have to do it day after day after day. To dignify drudgery is not easy. Yet it was an English servant girl—I wonder if she is in England today still carrying on—who wrote these lines:

> Lord of all pots and pans and tins, I have no time to be

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Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal Spirit, Who art the source of all excellence, inspire us today as though the sun of a new spiritual springtime had risen upon us. Carry us out of inner darkness and gloom, into light, out of our deadness of heart, into life, out of our barrenness into fruitfulness and the promise of a good harvest. Thanks be to Thee for Thy human ministers of light and love who have acquainted us with incarnate goodness, so that our eyes have seen it and our lives have been redeemed by it. For mothers and fathers, we thank Thee, for homes where fidelity and goodwill have made life beautiful, for friends whom we have loved and known, and for friends unknown, by whose multiplied service and sacrifice across the ages a great heritage has come to us. Make us worthy of this high company of the world's servants and saviours.

We need Thee in our troubles, for they are many. We are burdened with the tragic sorrows of the world, with the needs and griefs of those we love, and with inner perplexities and problems that destroy our peace. We must choose between faith and fear, courage and cynicism, strength of character and collapse of life—and we would choose the better way. Therefore we seek in Thee vision and power and hope. Grant us grace to accept the materials of life we must accept and to use them worthily. Open our eyes to see opportunity here where we are, to see holy ground here where we stand, to see resources of strength here where we struggle, and to see the horses and chariots of fire upon our hilltops so that we know those that be for us to be more than those that be against us.

For the world we pray, facing so great disaster that every hour is sobered by fearful premonition. O Thou who didst sit king at the flood, be sovereign now as this flood threatens the world. Ours the sin that caused it, we confess. Grant us patience to endure; fortitude that having done all we may, stand; let us lift by our faith and not depress by our discouragement; grant wisdom to those upon whom rest the nation's responsibilities; and so overrule the waywardness of man that doors may open where we had thought all escape was ended, and peace come at last not hopeless but with promise of justice and humane decency and freedom.

Especially we commend to Thy care Thy church, and ourselves as members of her fellowship. Keep us faithful to Christ in these days that tempt us to apostasy. Let us not trust Satan to cast out Satan! Help us above the carnage and the violence to see Christ still the hope of our world. Lo, how we crucify him afresh—yet will he rise again!

O God, who canst not make a good world out of evil men, cleanse our hearts, forgive our sins, and amend our ways. We pray in Christ's spirit. Amen.

Our Young People of the Church School Discover Their "Neighbors"

By Jessie Johnstone Lute

The Benevolence program of the Senior High School Department is worth telling about because it represents a very vital part of our Church School activities. This is no mere stereotyped "charity." Rather, it is a sound medium of social education and an enriching experience in communal living.

"Senior High" aims to have a share in the life and work of its whole community. Accordingly, since The Riverside Church community is local, national, and international, the benevolence work of the Department is carefully planned so that every member may have the opportunity of entering into a meaningful relation with each of these sections of our church neighborhood.

Let us see how the program goes into action. The Benevolence Committee is one of the four standing committees elected by the Department. Its task is, first, as one of its members expressed it, to "snoop and ferret," with aid from Miss Atkinson, among the welfare projects of the city for those to which the Senior High School boys and girls may give time and energy most effectively. Its second function is to educate the Department concerning "causes" of wider scope so that the program may be broadened to include service of national and international character. For these projects each member pledges financial support in token of his personal loyalty to the whole program. An envelope system is used, and the offering forms part of the worship experience each Sunday morning. This year the pledges totalled $230.00. Half the amount pledged by each class is used for a class project. The other half is turned over to the Department to be shared among the three main fields of activity. One quarter is allotted to local projects, one half is given to national work, and the other quarter goes into international service. Thus, by vote of the group this year, one quarter was given to the Social Service fund of The Riverside Church, one half to Pleasant Hill Academy and Migrant Aid Service as national projects, and one quarter to China Relief.

Over and above all these money gifts are the individual class projects, practical in character—the medium through which the young people come alive to the social and economic problems of their day. The first step that the classes take is to follow up the "leads" offered by the Benevolence Committee. Of course they are always free to explore other avenues of possible service, but the Committee's suggestions are usually pointed and varied enough to satisfy even the most exacting. Sometimes these projects are of several years' standing: each new group contributes something and adds to work already begun. These projects, therefore, are no mere "busy-work." Many have proved their value through the years.

The tenth grade this year found a

field of service in our own immediate neighborhood, at Sheltering Arms. The group visited with the boys and girls and heard a talk by the head of the home. Then two Friday evenings were spent in renovating and painting toys, chairs and other small articles of furniture. The group was very much interested in discovering how an "institution home" worked. They were very much interested in the boys and girls who live there and found the horizons of their lives being pushed back because of the happy experience of visiting such a home. When our boys and girls found that Sheltering Arms had a basketball team, games had to be arranged, of course. The games were the center of a happy evening of sociability. This benevolence project consequently turned out to be an adventure in neighborliness. This visit led to other trips through the Morningside community, so that this neighborhood, its resources and possibilities, gradually opened up to the understanding of the group.

The eleventh grade became interested in a neighborhood settlement house on the West Side. The accommodation for recreation and club programs in the barren building housing this institution was spacious, but that was about all that could be said for it. The Elevens made a trip down to the settlement one night when the activities were in full swing. They saw some of the problems facing the organization and heard the director explain how the settlement tried to solve the social and recreational difficulties of the neighborhood. Then the Elevens met alone and discussed what they had observed. They suggested ways in which they might help to solve some of these problems, and two lines of action were evolved. First of all, why not try to make the settlement rooms more attractive so that the boys and girls would want to go there? And secondly, how about helping to provide things for them to do when they do go? For the first scheme, bright curtains for the long bare windows were decided upon—though this meant the big task of making eight pairs of curtains each six feet long! In addition, small chairs and tables were to be painted in bright colors and benches were to be built and painted. To meet the second major need, the boys and girls set about making games. Play blocks were cut and painted, checker boards, Chinese checker games and equipment for other table games were made. Part of the funds for class projects took care of the expense of materials.

These eleventh-grade classes spent three Friday evenings at the settlement and some of the settlement house members came in to help. They wanted to have everything ready for Christmas, but when it became evident that the work could not be satisfactorily completed by this time, it was agreed that the first Monday of the Christmas holidays should be spent in finishing up the work. After Christmas an evening was spent in discussing what could be done further. The boys and girls were not satisfied to leave the settlement with only tangible evidence of their interest. What about the *people* with whom the settlement worked? Couldn't they share some of the program with them and get better acquainted? After a good discussion in which many opinions were aired concerning "real" and "artificial" coöperative enterprises, it was decided to send a committee down to the settlement to see if they would like to spend a social evening with our group towards achieving a better understanding of

each other. The result was a social evening planned jointly and held at the settlement. The plans made for mixing the two groups and the happy free spirit resulted in a very successful occasion. The deeper purpose of "giving oneself with one's gift," a desire to know along with a willingness to *be* known, these were some of the values that emerged from this experience which were actually much greater than those first set before the group.

The twelfth grade this year followed the pattern set by last year's twelfth grade. Its committee visited the Church of the Master, the Morningside Negro Church under the fine leadership of Rev. James Robinson, to find out if there was anything the class could do with some of the young people which would be a benefit to the community and the church. Two possibilities were discovered. One was to help fix up the dramatic storeroom and some stage equipment; the other was to work on some nursery school chairs and tables and to build a coat rack. The group chose to undertake the latter job. The class spent two Friday nights on the project and about ten of the Negro young people worked along with them. The forty-five chairs and seven tables were sandpapered and then painted. A coat rack was built and painted to match.

The practical fellowship in the common task opened up new issues for the class to consider. They decided they would like really to investigate the problem of racial prejudice. So a student leader came over and talked with them one Friday night and they got so interested in the questions raised that they decided to spend another Sunday period on it. The interest was so keen and the discussion so pointed that this was, perhaps, the most valuable part of the entire project.

A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GROUP IN A NOT-TOO-SERIOUS MOOD

The Benevolence program serves to bring before the boys and girls in a really meaningful way the pertinent question, "And who is my neighbor?" With the resources and coöperation of Miss Atkinson, and by means of speakers, pictures, movies and literature, the Benevolence Committee used several Friday evenings to bring to the Department a real awareness of the

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Neighborliness on the Hill

Riverside District of the Community Service Society Serves Hundreds of Families

By Alva Hammarskold

District Secretary of the Riverside District of the Community Service Society

In his sermon of February 9, 1941, Dr. Fosdick said, "Nothing impresses me more in studying the history of this church than its emphasis on the importance of the family. Always at the center of this church's life, one finds an absorbing concern about the home as though to say fathers, mothers, children—if we can keep that relationship right, then the foundations are secure."

Dr. Fosdick's words, spoken from the pulpit of Riverside Church, are being enacted in living reality in the neighborhood around the church. Through its own religious, educational and social program and through its coöperation with social agencies in the community, the church gives meaning to its beliefs in terms of daily action.

The neighborhood to which Riverside Church belongs is one of many contrasts. Blocks of substantial apartment houses stand within a stone's throw of the unheated cold-water tenements of La Salle Street and Moylan Place. Large areas of park and playground along the Hudson River are not far from crowded city streets turned into precarious play spaces out of necessity by the children who live there. It is a neighborhood of many nationalities and many occupations—a real cross-section of the city itself in which the health and happiness of each individual are the units out of which the health and happiness of the entire community are built.

Riverside Office—C. S. S.

At 271 West 125th Street, on the third floor, is the Riverside District Office of the Community Service Society. It is to this Family Service Office that families in the neighborhood bring some of their troubles and it is through this office that the Benevolence Fund of Riverside Church extends support to a number of those who are in financial need. This is one of the twelve different district offices of the Community Service Society's Family Service Division.

Each month its staff of ten experienced case workers are helping approximately 250 families living in the area extending from Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River and from 106th Street to 150th Street. All of the resources of the Community Service Society, which serves three boroughs, may be called upon by Riverside case workers in bringing to each family the special help needed. Members of Riverside Church are personally acquainted with the Kennedy Employment Service run jointly by the church and the Society which helps well-qualified persons to find suitable work. The Society also has health services, summer camps and expert consultation in psychiatry,

home economics, housing, nutrition and other special fields of knowledge.

What Problems Do Riverside Families Bring?

The problems which bring families to the Riverside District Office for help are as different as the families themselves. In some cases, the need is a financial one. This was true with the Allens,* a young couple with two small daughters, who had gotten behind in their rent after relatives with whom they shared an apartment moved away. Mr. Allen was employed but his wages of $18 a week covered only minimum living expenses and allowed no margin for emergencies. It was the fund provided by The Riverside Church Benevolence Committee which enabled the Society to provide the cost of moving expenses and part of the first month's rent in a small apartment for the Allens. With this financial crisis behind them, they asked help in planning how to manage their regular expenses wisely so that they would be prepared for future emergencies. A full discussion of their budget revealed that they were paying $4 a month for furniture purchased several years ago when Mrs. Allen returned home after a year in a tuberculosis sanatorium. The steady drain on their small income made it almost impossible for Mrs. Allen to meet certain other necessary expenses. Again, through funds provided by Riverside Church, the family was helped to clear up the small remaining balance so that their full income might be used for current expenses. At Mrs. Allen's own request, an appointment was made for her to talk with the Society's Home Economics Consultant, from whom she received practical help in setting up a workable budget. Mr. Allen has since received a raise in pay so that he is now earning $22 a week which, with good management, adequately covers the family's requirements.

*Not real name.

Non-Financial Troubles

Many of those who come for help, whether or not they are in need of financial assistance, find their difficulties complicated by worry about money, and the normal strains and adjustments of family life made more difficult by crowded living conditions, lack of recreation and an ever-present insecurity about the future. Often, however, the problems which bring people to the Riverside District Office are not financial ones. Sometimes there are serious misunderstandings between husband and wife or between parents and children which can be brought into focus through discussion with an understanding case worker whose approach is not judgmental but who is experienced in helping people to see their own problems clearly and in helping them to find their own solutions. Parents turn to the case worker for advice about the behavior problems of their children and when severe crises occur, such as serious illness or sudden loss of a job. Young people often come for help in finding vocational opportunities and to discuss their social and recreational problems.

Robert, for example, is the 16-year-old adopted son of a rather elderly couple. He had become rebellious and moody and had been reported several times for truancy. His foster-parents were deeply worried and with good reason, for it seemed likely that he was on the way toward more serious trouble. They turned to the case worker at the Riverside District Office for help. Robert found it easier to talk with her

RIVERSIDE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY SERVICE SOCIETY WORK TOGETHER FOR THE PROTECTION OF FAMILY LIFE

than with his foster-parents about his social and recreational problems. He is now finding friends and more constructive leisure-time activities through his new membership in the Sea Scouts—the cost of which, incidentally, was met through The Riverside Church Benevolence Fund.

What Is Meant by Case Work?

In the process of helping people, the case worker's first effort is to understand what the trouble is, how serious it is, what has contributed to it. Sometimes this can be learned fairly quickly. Sometimes it takes long and patient study, in which the worker and the family must participate. Latent strengths must be discovered and utilized. It is the case worker's job to help the family mobilize these strengths. She must also understand the weak spots in the families she is trying to help. She must be able to see clearly the personal difficulties and antagonisms. This is a task demanding, along with an understanding of people, a deep regard for their worth as human beings and a recognition of the importance of family life.

Sometimes the problems are simple ones but more often, they are complex and have struck deeply into the roots of family life, resulting in disappointments, anxieties, fears and sometimes straining family relationships almost to the breaking point. Such severe problems have been a long time in the making. To understand why they exist and to know whether much or little can be done about them is a slow process. It requires of the case worker a basic liking for people, coupled with an

(*Concluded on page 167*)

Behind the Scenes With The Riverside Church Choir

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story has been prepared by a group of the choir members.

AS AN interesting look into the activities of The Riverside Church Choir, we are going to take you "backstage" and give you a glimpse of just how it runs. There are countless details which must be closely watched in order to have a service with the dignity and continuity that you enjoy each Sunday.

It is, of course, needless to mention the many responsibilities which Mr. Kinsley shoulders and, as in any large group, he must have assistants. There is a librarian and an assistant librarian. Their duties are varied and involve many details. They see that the music is properly distributed to the members of the choir and that it is collected after each service and properly filed in the library. The ministers must be provided each Sunday with the Litany; the Control Room must be given copies of all the music to be used at both the morning and afternoon services. The Narthex is furnished with a copy of the offertory in order that the secretary there may know when it is time for the deacons to present the offering at the Altar for blessing. Attendance records must be kept; anthems must be timed and dated and notation made as to whether they were used at a morning or an afternoon service. The complete musical service, including words of all anthems, is set up and sent in to the office for printing in the *Calendar*. When outside groups participate in the services, seating, processional and recessional details must be worked out. Various records of programs are kept up-to-date and at Mr. Kinsley's disposal. Mr. Charles Prall, of the bass section, very capably looks after all these details with the assistance of Mr. George Monteer, of the baritone section.

A very valuable helper to Mr. Kinsley is Miss Elsie Gray who turns pages for him at the organ and also presses the numerous buttons, giving signals at the proper time for the opening prayer, followed by the "Amen" in the Ambulatory before services, and also to the Narthex for the deacons to present the offering at the Altar, thus giving a double-check to eliminate any possible error.

Mr. John McClement, of the baritone section, has charge of the group who sing the "Amen" in the Ambulatory at the end of the service.

There are two rehearsals a week, one on the Ninth Floor and another in the Chancel with the organ. On Sunday mornings the choir meets at 10:15 for a "warm-up" in preparation for the services.

The music is carefully numbered, catalogued and a card file kept in Mr. Kinsley's studio showing the dates the hymns were sung, timing, soloists required and words. The system used is a very simple one. Each member is assigned a number and is given the music bearing the same number so that he uses the same piece of music at all times. Hence, all markings and instructions are there for future

use. There are 368 anthems and approximately 60 oratorios, motets and cantatas in the library.

The choir numbers approximately fifty including the quartet of soloists who are Marjorie McClung, soprano; Dorothea Flexer, contralto; Hardesty Johnson, tenor; John Percival, bass. In keeping with the policy of The Riverside Church, the choir is non-sectarian and interdenominational, and many states in the Union are represented. As an item of interest the count is as follows:

Alabama (2)
California (1)
Florida (2)
Illinois (1)
Indiana (1)
Iowa (2)
Massachusetts (3)
Michigan (2)
Minnesota (1)
Missouri (3)
New Jersey (4)
New York (13)
Ohio (2)
Oregon (1)
Pennsylvania (5)
Rhode Island (1)
South Carolina (1)
Vermont (1)
Washington (1)
West Virginia (1)
Alaska (1)

Upon one who is very capable in looking after the appearance of the choir falls the great task of assigning lockers, seeing that cottas are properly laundered and ready for services, and fitting vestments and the repairs to same. Mrs. Charles Biehle, our Choir Mother, has charge of all this responsibility.

The choir also serves as a training field for Juilliard students. Each year a certain number of students are selected for their musicianship and sing with the choir for experience, repertoire and training for which credit is given them by Juilliard for their graduation.

The accompanying diagram indicates how the seating of the choir is arranged in the Chancel according to the various parts and in relation to the soloists.

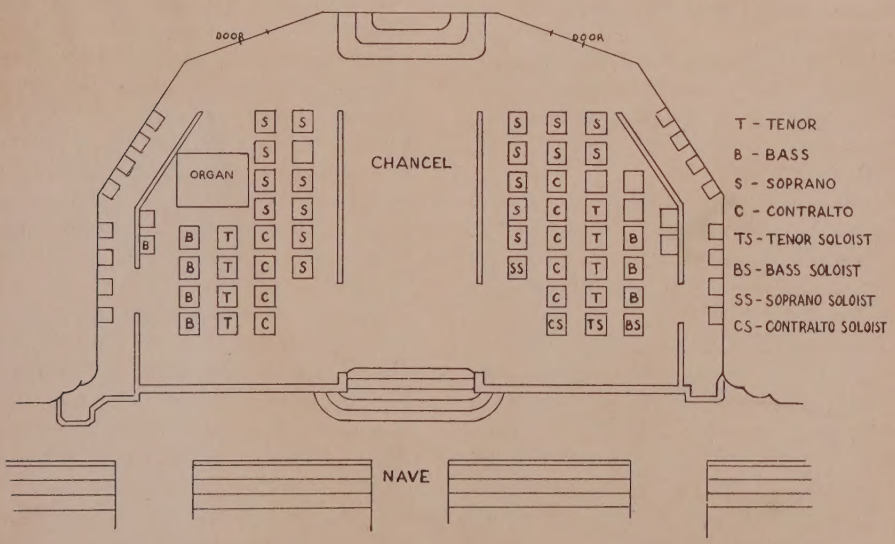

DIAGRAM OF CHOIR SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Thanks—In America

By Grace H. Patton

In days like these I thank the Lord
For my accustomed "bed and board."
I can sleep all the night in bed
Without bombs bursting overhead,
While some folks crouch on subway stair,
Or stretch in subterranean lair
Like furtive worms beneath the sod,
And not upstanding sons of God.

When I am hungry I can feed
On food that's suited to my need.
I can have comrades at my board,
Knowing I need not scrimp and hoard
To make ends meet by puzzling hard
Over a niggard ration card.—
Such things, once taken carelessly,
Now seem like miracles to me!

I can take pleasure in the sight
Of brightly lighted streets at night;
I can go forth upon the street
And not sense fear in those I meet.
I can look up into the sky
And not see dark shapes flying high,
Ready to drop their load of death
To blind my eyes and stop my breath.

Yet—who am I that I should know
These rights my fellows must forego?
I am no better, Lord, than they.
I've gone my heedless, selfish way.—
So, while in thanks I humbly kneel,
I ask that I may strongly feel
My obligation more and more
To fight that Hideous Monster—WAR!

▽ ▽ ▽

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

(*Concluded from page 160*)

need in the wider areas of our community life, so that they might be more intelligent when the time came to vote on the allotment of their money at the end of the year.

This year, for example, the Department explored, through one or more of these mediums, China in Wartime, Pleasant Hill Academy, The Lord's Acre Movement, the Refugee Hostel Work of the American Friends' Service Committee, Friendship House, and the Migrant Aid Service. Each cause is discussed and evaluated and the whole group votes on the distribution of the benevolence money. The boys and girls thus learn the importance of giving intelligently where the need is greatest. This is essential preparation for active and useful church leadership.

The final activity of the benevolence program is to be a "work party," where the boys and girls are helping the Nursery School renovate and repair its equipment after a long hard winter! This will help the Nursery School start its next session with new, clean toys without much strain upon the budget. The boys and girls will find a new insight into another department of the church, pride in its equipment, and a sense of helping their church in a useful service.

Perhaps no more convincing indication of the growth and effectiveness of this aspect of the Senior High School Department's work can be found than the testimony of one of its members. He says: "There is not an atmosphere of infinite greatness in our activities, but one in which we can feel that we are a part of, and can affect, its workings. This is my idea of a Christian approach. It builds from within, instead of forming a veneer around each individual."

NEIGHBORLINESS ON THE HILL

(*Concluded from page 163*)

understanding of human nature, reinforced by skill born of training and experience.

Trouble and stress come to most people at some time. Many people can survive these difficult times through the use of their own natural resources. Others need the help of the neighborhood agencies supported by the community. About half of the families who turn to the Riverside District Office in time of trouble are referred by friends or relatives who already know about this skilful neighborly help. Some are sent by other social agencies, such as the Home Relief Bureau or the Henry Street Visiting Nurses. Schools, hospitals, and courts often send the troubled people with whom they come in contact. Riverside Church also refers a good number of families and individuals for personal or financial help, and in the same way persons known to the case workers at 271 West 125th Street are frequently referred to the church for participation in its spiritual, educational and social activities. In this way, Riverside Church and the Community Service Society are translating into living reality their profound belief in the primary importance of sound family life.

The Society is in full agreement with Dr. Fosdick's words of February 9th about the significance of home and the family. Stanley P. Davies, Executive Director of the Community Service Society, says in an article published in the *1941 Social Work Year Book*, "The virtues that are needed today are those that grow out of the modern family at its best: emotional maturity; the ability and courage to be oneself, coupled with regard for the rights of others and respect for their individuality; the capability, in the light of individual differences, of working loyally with others for common social objectives. It must be emphasized, however, that—this goal is beset with many difficulties and requires a more conscious and directed social effort than ever before."

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SERMON

(*Concluded from page 156*)

A saint by doing lovely things, by watching late with Thee,
Or praying in the dawnlight, or storming Heaven's gates.
Make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love, and fill it with Thy peace,
Forgive me all my worrying and make all grumbling cease.
Thou Who didst love to give men food, in room or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do—I do it unto Thee.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon March 23, 1941.

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ANNUAL REPORTS— THE RIVERSIDE EQUIVALENT

At the time Dr. Fosdick assumed the pastorate of the Park Avenue Baptist Church in 1926 the CHURCH MONTHLY was established. The first number appeared in November of that year and carried the sermon which the new pastor had preached on October 10th. Since then a sermon a month has appeared regularly.

In addition to the sermon, which has been our monthly feature article, the activities of the church from week to week have been reflected in many articles from the pen of the active members of the church, staff members, and from interested and friendly contributors associated in one way or another with our work at home and abroad. Taken all together, these one hundred and seventy-five issues have pretty well covered the church program in all its departments, and have made the story of the current experience of the church available to the entire church constituency. Because this information has been going out regularly it has not been found necessary nor, from the expense angle, desirable to publish any other statistics or information such as is ordinarily found in "Annual Reports."

The MONTHLY will not appear in July or in August of this year, but will be in your mail again in September. This announcement has been running in all of our issues for the past few months but we are emphasizing it here so that readers who may not have noticed it will know of our change of policy.